

# Infant Mortality

## Facts about Infant Mortality in Tennessee

- For 2001, Tennessee's infant mortality rate ranked 5<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation. <sup>1</sup>
- In 2001, Tennessee's infant mortality rate exceeded the national rate by 29%.<sup>1</sup>
- Low birth-weight infants accounted for 65.5% of all infant deaths in Tennessee in 2002.<sup>2</sup>
- The infant mortality rate for Black babies (18.4 deaths per 1,000 live births) in 2002 was more than 2 ½ times the rate for White babies (7.1 per 1,000 live births).<sup>3</sup>

## Factors that lead to increased infant mortality

- Teenage pregnancy
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs
- Mothers with less than a high school education
- Maternal infections during pregnancy
- Pre-term deliveries
- Low-birth weight babies
- Poverty

## Activities to prevent/reduce infant mortality

- Early and regular prenatal care
- Planned pregnancies
- Strong, positive family support
- Regular exercise
- Avoidance of alcohol & drugs
- Placing babies on their backs to sleep

## Tennessee Department of Health services to prevent/reduce infant mortality

The Tennessee Department of Health has a number of services that work with communities and families to make sure babies have the best chance of living long and healthy lives.

**Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT)** -- Local health departments in all 95 counties provide well-child EPSDT exams for infants from birth to age twenty-one. These exams provide an important opportunity to identify health problems early, assure that children are properly immunized, and provide parents with information on infant growth, development, and care. **FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL YOUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT.**

**Healthy Start** -- Healthy Start is an intensive home visiting program for first time parents. Its goals are health promotion and child abuse prevention. Eligible families may begin the program during the third trimester of pregnancy through the child turning four months of age. Families may remain in the program until the child is five years of age. **FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL (615) 741-7353.**

**Genetics and Newborn Screening** -- The Genetics and Newborn Screening program provides access to genetic screening, diagnostic testing, and counseling services for individuals and families who have, or are at risk for, genetic disorders. The newborn screening program screens all babies born in Tennessee for certain genetic conditions and then refers those identified for further diagnosis and treatment. Recently, most babies born in



**TENNESSEE**  
DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH**

**It's About Time!**

Tennessee can receive hearing screening shortly after birth. **FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL (615) 741-7353.**

**Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)** -- Food, nutrition counseling, and access to health services are provided to low-income women, infants, and children under the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, popularly known as WIC. WIC provides federal funds to Tennessee to provide supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children who are found to be at nutritional risk. **FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL YOUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT OR CALL 1-800-DIAL-WIC (1-800-342-5942)**

**Family Planning Program** -- The family planning program provides education and counseling, medical examinations, laboratory tests, and contraceptive supplies for any person of reproductive age. Services are available in all 95 counties at 129 clinic sites which include all local health departments, Planned Parenthood clinics, some student health clinics, and primary care clinics. **FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL YOUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT OR CALL (615) 741-7353.**

**Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Substance Abuse Treatment** -- The Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services has information and a statewide referral network of providers available for persons who have alcohol or drug problems. The services are available regardless of ability to pay. **FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL (615) 741-1921.**

<sup>1</sup> United Health Foundation, 2000-2001 Data, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<sup>2</sup> 2002 Provisional Birth Cohort Data, Tennessee Department of Health, Office of Policy Planning and Assessment, Division of Health Statistics.

<sup>3</sup> 2002 Death certificate data, Tennessee Department of Health, Office of Policy, Planning, and Assessment, Health Information Tennessee web site.

